

The changes that have been attempted and those that have been made, such as CAFE standards, the fuel efficiency standards and improving them for the first time in 35 years, are so overwhelmingly accepted by the American public, those could not be ignored.

The ideology being expressed by the previous speaker I think is reflected in some. You don't need the polls when you go out and talk to people, but if you want to get to the data you are hearing them talking about, 72 percent of the American people disagree. Twenty-eight percent of the American people agree that President Bush's economic policies are the right direction for this country.

So when I hear talk about supply and demand, as if it is gravity, as if there have not been decisions made to influence either the supply chain or the demand by interests, by the growth, the astronomical growth of lobbyists, especially energy lobbyists at this place, it is bordering on the ridiculous. And when I hear about ADAM SMITH being talked about, the only "invisible hand" that is operating in our energy markets is that invisible handshake that happened in the White House between the oil company executives when they created this current energy policy.

I would like to take a chance here to illustrate what has happened on energy as it impacts the economy.

Now, again, speaking to the American people, when they are going and filling up, they are rightfully disturbed. They are rightfully concerned, and many of those people are understanding a larger portion of their disposable income is being eaten up in fuel costs, transportation costs.

The policy that was put into place that has driven this upward climb and that was so conveniently taken out here, about right in here and shown, has been a steady upward trajectory. And they are right. Several things are happening here.

There is no doubt that supply, world supply for fuels, especially with the rise of China and India, is having an impact in this. The only question I would ask on that is, who didn't know that back here? Who couldn't anticipate those changes and start planning ahead, instead of being reactive to everything that has happened?

This administration has been wrong on almost every single indicator economically around the world, socially, and they have not gotten any of it correct since they have come to office. So the trajectory is pretty steady, almost exactly what could have been expected on that.

But there are several other things at work here. One of the things is about this energy policy. I would love to show you and read from that energy policy to tell the Speaker, my colleagues and anyone in America that would like to know what that energy policy is. But the problem is, the White House claimed executive privilege, and in 2004 the Supreme Court upheld that executive privilege.

So that meeting that took place, we do have some reports on who was there, by the way. One of the first visitors on February 14, 2001, just 2 weeks after the inauguration and the President took office, was James Rouse, the vice president of ExxonMobil. He was also the major donor to all of the festivities that happened here with the inauguration of President Bush.

A week later was a long-time friend of President Bush and a supporter, Kenneth Lay, then, of course, head of Enron. They had two meetings. By March 5, the country's biggest utilities, Duke Energy and Constellation Energy, were in the White House. Then British Petroleum came on March 22. And that was followed by 20 oil and drilling companies to get meetings. At this point, to this day, none of that documentation is public. None of it has been out there. None of it has shown what happened. And what we saw was a steady increase and a policy that put this entire Nation's energy needs in the hands of oil company executives.

Now, I could almost get lucky in my district out in southern Minnesota. There is somebody who was in the room, somebody who knows. That somebody now lives in my district—well, temporarily. That someone is the vice president of Enron, Jeff Skilling. He is in the Federal Penitentiary in Waseca, Minnesota, in my district. He was with Enron. He understood what happened here, and he ended up, after going to court, in Federal prison for 24 years.

The policies here have nothing to do with supply and demand. They have everything to do with special interests and corporate interests over the national interests of this country.

So as you hear the previous speakers speak, and they talk about us trying to take energy off the market, the fact of the matter is, as I said, the previous speaker's district borders mine, I am very proud that in southern Minnesota my district is one of the Nation's top four producers of wind energy. We have beautiful wind generators going up and down the district. We have small towns, like Minnesota Lake, that are taking their town's energy and deriving over 75 percent of the energy for the town through the use of clean, renewable wind generation.

We are also one of the leading producers of alternative fuels and biofuels. And let me be very clear about this. As people talk about, well, biofuels are driving up the cost of food products, of commodities, there is a definite moral argument to be made of the idea of taking food, such as corn or soybeans, and turning it into fuel. The fact of the matter is, most economists agree that the impact on that is negligible, compared to the impact of the price of oil.

There is something I would like to quote here, and I would like you to see a couple of things here. When President Bush was asked prior to the election during the campaign back in 2000, he was asked what he would do to help

control energy costs, he said, "What I think the President ought to do when gas prices spike is he ought to get on the phone with the OPEC cartel and say I expect you to open your spigots, and the President of the United States starts jawboning with OPEC members to lower the price."

Well, in April 2005 there is a pretty famous picture here of the President holding hands with that. That is about the point where oil went up. This is from an ally who has promised to help us pay for the war in Iraq and has yet to pay 7 percent of their total cost.

Now, if they can't make it on \$118 a barrel, it makes it pretty difficult for me to understand when they are ever going to get jawboned into doing something about this.

The next thing that I think is a bit of a fallacy here in this whole free market thing and this supply and demand, as if it is going to come down and drop upon us and be in perfect order, is why in the world did my colleagues on the other side of the aisle continue to vote for \$18.6 billion in subsidies to the oil companies? At \$40 billion in profits for one oil company alone last year, over \$100 billion in profits for the three major oil companies, they haven't got it figured out how to run their business to make a profit without the subsidies?

And what is at stake here is this isn't about class warfare. This isn't about, as the previous speaker from Michigan talked about, not being a friend of the oil companies or being their enemies. The fact of the matter is they have an unfair advantage on a unlevel playing field. If my wind generation and my cellulosic ethanol producers could get the same amount of subsidies driven back into research and development that we are putting into oil and natural gas exploration, I guarantee you we would compete on that.

I guarantee you we would have renewable energy sources that would take several things away. One is the dependence on foreign oil. That driver or that magnet of conflict around the world would be taken out of the equation. We would also start to create rural jobs and rural green collar jobs that would resuscitate the economy.

This President and this energy policy that has created these prices that have been on a steady upward climb also took an economy that went from a manufacturing base and a base of middle class workers, who could figure it out. And this is all they are asking for. They go to work, they work hard at their job, they make the right decisions, they work 40 hours a week, maybe a little overtime.

Here is what they are asking for. All they want in return is the ability to have a home, the ability to have transportation to get to and from their job and maybe partake in their recreational activities. They would like to have health care for themselves and their children that is affordable and they can go when it is needed. And they would like to get to the point